

## METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning and economic development district representing 101 cities and towns in metropolitan Boston. In addition, the Council shares oversight responsibility for the region's federally funded transportation program as one of 14 members of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization. The Council's legislative mandate is to provide technical and professional resources to improve the physical, social and economic condition of its district, and to develop sound responses to issues of regional significance. The Council provides research, studies, publications, facilitation and technical assistance in the areas of land use and the environment, housing, transportation, water resources management, economic development, demographic and socioeconomic data, legislative policy and interlocal partnerships that strengthen the operation of local governments. More information about MAPC is available at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org).

The Council is governed by 101 municipal government representatives, 21 gubernatorial appointees, and 10 state and 3 City of Boston officials. An Executive Committee composed of 25 members oversees agency operations and appoints an executive director. The agency employs approximately 30 professional and administrative staff. Funding for Council activities is derived from contracts with government agencies and private entities, foundation grants, and a per-capita assessment charged to municipalities within the district.

In the past year, the Council has focused on initiatives that respond to regional challenges, some of which include:

**MetroFuture -- Making a Greater Boston Region:** State law requires that MAPC prepare, from time to time, a comprehensive regional plan. This planning process is now underway and is called the *MetroFuture* initiative. It started by asking the people of Greater Boston about their aspirations for the future of the region, and continues with a comparison between those visions and the future that will arise if our current trends continue unchanged. We are finding both exciting prospects and interesting challenges lie ahead if we continue our current pattern of growth and development. Here are just a few of the results, out to the year 2030:

- **Population will grow slowly, while the number of households will grow more quickly.** By 2030, the region's population will have increased by 10%, approximately a third as fast as the projected U.S. population growth (29%). The number of households is projected to increase by 19% for that same time period, at a greater rate than the population, due to a continued decline in household size.
- **Consumption of land continues apace.** Fifteen percent of land that was open in 2000 will be developed by 2030.
- **An older population will demand more homes and health care.** There will be declines in all age groups under 55 and substantial increases in empty-nesters and elders, creating demand for different housing and contributing to an expected near-tripling of health care costs from 2000 to 2030.
- **Water in short supply outside the MWRA.** Communities with public water systems not connected to the MWRA system will face serious water constraints by 2030; approximately half will exceed their permitted withdrawal rates.

These are among the results that will serve as a starting point for discussions across the region about alternative paths the region could take, beginning with a series of briefings early in 2006. Visit [www.MetroFuture.org](http://www.MetroFuture.org) to learn more about the project, and contact [MetroFuture@mapc.org](mailto:MetroFuture@mapc.org) to learn about how to host a briefing about the region's future.

**Municipal Planning:** MAPC continues to assist municipalities in implementing Smart Growth Principles through local zoning changes. Under the Vision 2020 program, MAPC provided zoning analyses or draft bylaws to the towns of Duxbury, Stoughton and Hanover. Through FY05 funding from Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grants, MAPC assisted Topsfield in developing

a Low Impact Development storm-water and erosion control bylaw. Under funding secured through the Priority Development Fund, MAPC is developing mixed use or multi-family bylaws for the towns of Bedford, Stow, Millis, Southborough and Stoughton. Just recently, MAPC received notice of approval of its application for Smart Growth Technical Assistance funds to assist the towns of Hopkinton, Ashland and Southborough in examining alternative futures for the 900 acre Weston Nurseries property. MAPC also continues to provide information to municipalities regarding the Smart Growth Overlay Districts enabled under Chapter 40R.

**Metro Mayors Coalition:** MAPC works with the mayors and city managers of 10 municipalities in the urban core on issues such as group purchasing, employee health insurance, regional public safety, and municipal public finance. Through this work, MAPC staffed the statewide Municipal Finance Task Force which reached consensus on a variety of public policy changes to reinvigorate the partnership between local and state government. We also formulated an \$11 million grant program to fund inter-local and multi-disciplinary approaches to stemming the tide of youth violence, drug use, and gang activities in the region. This program became law late in 2005.

**The Metro Data Center,** an official US Census affiliate, provides in-depth analysis of trends in the region and conducts research on emerging issues that will strengthen the Council's ability to plan for the future. The Center works to increase public understanding of and access to demographic, social, economic and land use data and trends that affect the Boston metropolitan area. The Center also releases regular publications to maintain a general awareness about how growth continues to impact communities. The Center provides current accurate data to legislators, municipalities, public and private agencies, and the general public about growth trends in the communities and subregions of the greater Boston area.

**Transportation planning:** MAPC staff played an active role in helping to revise the MassHighway Design Manual, now known as the Project Development and Design Guidebook. As vice chair of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization, MAPC worked to develop the annual Transportation Improvement Program, including transportation spending priorities for the region. We also developed population and employment projections to the year 2030, to be used in scenario modeling in the new Regional Transportation Plan and MetroFuture (see above) in 2006.

**Legislative Advocacy:** The Legislative Committee has worked to promote legislation that is of regional interest and is informed by smart growth principles (visit [http://www.mapc.org/regional\\_planning/MAPC\\_Smart\\_Growth.html](http://www.mapc.org/regional_planning/MAPC_Smart_Growth.html) to view the list of principles).

At the beginning of the legislative session the Committee recommended for endorsement a full legislative agenda, which was subsequently endorsed by MAPC's Executive Committee. Among many items, the priorities include reform of the state's surplus land disposition policy; recapitalization of the brownfields redevelopment fund; reform of the state's antiquated zoning laws; and repeat offender legislation. Contact Legislative Director Joel Barrera at [jbarrera@mapc.org](mailto:jbarrera@mapc.org) to learn more about the committee's priorities and how your community can get involved in regional advocacy efforts.

**Metropolitan Highway System Advisory Board:** MAPC staffs this board, established in 1997 by the Commonwealth to advise the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority on issues relative to land use, air rights, zoning, and environmental impacts associated with development of land owned by the authority. In 2005, the Board reviewed a number of Requests for Proposals and development proposals for various parcels along the Central Artery surface.

**Regional Services Consortiums:** The Regional Consortiums Project collectively procured more than \$3,000,000 in office supplies for 32 municipalities, and highway maintenance services valued at \$16,000,000 for South Shore and MetroWest cities and towns. The project also facilitates collegial forums among members' chief administrative officers that focus on collective

problem solving and resource sharing. MAPC, in partnership, with the Greater Boston Police Council, assists over 300 units of local government in procuring police, public works and general use vehicles, along with various public safety supplies.

**Public Safety and Homeland Security:** MAPC provides planning and fiduciary services to the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council (NERAC), the Northeastern Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC) and the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Council (METROLEC). Activities include procurement, research, and planning to enhance the delivery of public safety services and to ensure the region is prepared for either a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

**Hazard Mitigation:** *Pre-Disaster Mitigation* (PDM) plans help communities prepare for natural disasters such as floods, winter storms, wind, and geologic hazards. In 2005, MAPC completed PDM plans for 10 communities on the North Shore and 10 communities on the South Shore. MAPC is also developing PDM plans for 9 Inner Core communities, including Boston and neighboring communities, which will be completed in 2006. FEMA has awarded a grant to MAPC to develop PDM plans in 28 towns in the MAGIC, MetroWest, and North Suburban subregions, beginning in 2006.

**495/MetroWest Water Resources Strategy:** Working with the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, MAPC completed three major components of a comprehensive water strategy for the corridor:

- the *Massachusetts Low Impact Development Toolkit*, available at <http://www.mapc.org/lid.html>, was published and two regional workshops were held to present the toolkit to the public. The toolkit recently received the 2005 Outstanding Planning Project Award from the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association;
- *Once Is Not Enough*, a guide to water reuse in Massachusetts, was published. It is available at [http://www.mapc.org/regional\\_planning/waterreuse.html](http://www.mapc.org/regional_planning/waterreuse.html); and
- two regional contracts for Leak Detection Services were developed for both the 495/MetroWest communities, as well as all the entire MAPC region. Learn more about leak detection services that are available to cities and towns in MAPC's January edition of the *Regional Record*, our electronic newsletter, located at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org).

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** Every five years, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is responsible for developing a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in partnership with the Economic Development Administration. The 2005 CEDS, *Insuring Greater Boston's Prosperity*, contains an analysis of economic trends and conditions and highlights five challenges to economic well-being. It sets a context for inviting regional participation that moves toward a regional response to the challenges. The report is included in the January edition of MAPC's *Regional Record*, available at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org).

**Wind Power:** Using a grant from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, MAPC recently completed a project to help ten North Shore coastal communities understand opportunities and obstacles to siting land-based wind turbines on municipally-controlled properties. The project helped the communities to identify regulatory barriers to wind, and the environmental and financial impacts of a wind project. Area residents took part in a web-based energy survey and each community received wind information and siting maps. MAPC hosted two wind educational forums as part of the project, helped the city of Lynn to draft a wind turbine siting ordinance and facilitated the creation of Alternative Energy Committees in Gloucester, Swampscott and Rockport to advance the siting of wind turbines in their communities. Information about the North Shore Wind Project is also included in the January *Regional Record* at [www.mapc.org](http://www.mapc.org).

**MEPA Project Reviews:** MAPC reviews projects under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and submits comments on projects with significant regional impacts. In 2005, MAPC reviewed 166 MEPA filings (Environmental Notification Forms, Environmental Impact Reports,

and Notices of Project Change), and submitted comments to EOEa on 58 of these. One of the most significant reviews of the year was a "Peer Review" conducted by MAPC and the Old Colony Planning Council on the proposed *Village Center Plan* for the former South Weymouth Naval Air Station. Visit

[http://www.mapc.org/whats\\_new/SWNAS/SWNAS\\_Summary\\_Document.pdf](http://www.mapc.org/whats_new/SWNAS/SWNAS_Summary_Document.pdf) to view our comments.

**Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC) (Acton, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Stow)**

In 2005, the MAGIC subregion organized a major Emergency Preparedness Forum to discuss federal, state, regional, local, and public health emergency planning functions, plans, coordination, and cooperation; began preparations to participate in Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning under a federal grant received by MAPC; joined MetroWest, the Southwest planning group, and MAPC in a roundtable discussion of "The Community Preservation Act: Five Years' Experience"; hosted two legislative breakfasts; provided feedback to MAPC on the role and function of subregions, on legislative priorities, and on MAPC's Strategic Plan; monitored activities related to BRAC review of Hanscom, potential plans under expansion and closure scenarios, and potential roles for MAGIC/MAPC; hosted a morning Planners' Roundtable where local planners and planning boards could share information, learn about innovative tools and techniques, and plan cooperative approaches; and provided input into various transportation plans, including TIP projects, planning study ideas for the UPWP, regional bicycle and pedestrian plans, and the State Transportation Plan. MAGIC also provided support for multi-community (Bedford-Stow) development of mixed use zoning bylaws funded by the state's Priority Development Fund program. In this project, a visual preference poll, information on existing and model bylaws, and public education materials are being designed to benefit other communities.

MAPC Annual Report prepared and submitted by Marc D. Draisen, Executive Director, Metropolitan Area Planning Council.